

NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

TO: Responsible Agencies and Interested Parties

FROM: Placer County Water Agency

LEAD AGENCIES: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) propose to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the project identified below. Reclamation is the Lead Agency for NEPA, and PCWA is Lead Agency for CEQA.

PROJECT: Sacramento River Water Reliability Study (SRWRS)

APPLICANTS: The Applicants are the following SRWRS cost-sharing partners: Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD), City of Roseville (Roseville), and City of Sacramento (Sacramento).

PROJECT PURPOSE

The SRWRS cost-sharing partners (PCWA, SSWD, Roseville, and Sacramento) have identified their long-term needs for additional water supplies to meet growing water supply demands and reliability objectives in their respective service areas. The goal of the SRWRS is to develop a water supply plan that is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement (April 24, 2000) objectives of pursuing a Sacramento River diversion to meet water supply needs of the Placer-Sacramento region and promoting ecosystem preservation along the lower American River.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project location (see Figure 1) is the greater Sacramento metropolitan area, encompassing portions of southern Sutter County, northern Sacramento County, and western and southern Placer County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To meet the water supply needs of the cost-sharing partners, the SRWRS will identify a package of water supply infrastructure components, including new or expanded diversions from the Sacramento, Feather, or American rivers, and new or expanded water treatment and pumping facilities, storage tanks, and major transmission and distribution pipelines.

The SRWRS will include a feasibility study and an EIS/EIR for identified water supply alternatives as the basis for seeking necessary Biological Opinions and permits from the responsible resource agencies to allow execution of necessary agreements and construction of the recommended water supply infrastructure. Development of the SRWRS will be consistent with the following principles:

- Satisfying requirements stipulated in Public Law 106-554, the Congressional authorizing legislation for the SRWRS, to complete a feasibility study for a Sacramento River diversion that is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement and includes the following components: 1) development of a range of reasonable options, 2) an environmental evaluation, and 3) consultation with federal and state resource management agencies regarding potential impacts and mitigation measures. Furthermore, Congress requires the SRWRS to be developed in coordination with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED).
- Observing existing applicable laws, regulations, water rights, contracts and legal agreements, and federal planning guidelines, including, but not limited to, NEPA, federal planning guidelines such as *Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies*, CEQA, California Water Laws, and obligations of the cost-sharing partners in their charters and as defined in California laws.
- Minimizing overall impact on the environment to the extent feasible, being cost-effective, and complementing and enhancing the overall reliability of the Placer-Sacramento region's water supply system through increased interconnectivity and source redundancy.

The SRWRS plan will be consistent with the Water Forum Agreement in pursuing a Sacramento River diversion to accomplish the following objectives envisioned in the agreement: 1) meeting the needs of planned future growth within the Placer-Sacramento region, 2) maintaining a reliable water supply while reducing diversions of surface water from the American River in future dry years to preserve the river ecosystem, and 3) enhancing groundwater conjunctive management to help sustain the quality and availability of groundwater for the future.

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The proposed project (Elkhorn Diversion alternative, see Figure 1) encompasses constructing a joint diversion from the Sacramento River and treatment facilities to serve the cost-sharing partners. The diversion facility would consist of expanding the existing Elkhorn Diversion owned by the Natomas Mutual Water Company (NMWC) on the east bank of the Sacramento River, upstream of the mouth of the American River at approximately river mile 73.3, or constructing a new diversion near the existing Elkhorn Diversion. Water treatment, storage, and pumping facilities would be located near the river. Also, a transmission line would connect to the west end of the existing Cooperative Transmission Pipeline/Northridge Transmission Pipeline in Antelope to serve SSWD, and an extension of that line would be built north to the service areas of Roseville and PCWA. A separate transmission line would extend south to connect to Sacramento's existing distribution system.

The five alternatives currently under consideration in the SRWRS include a "No Project/No Action" alternative, and four additional alternatives (see Figure 1). For these four alternatives, the partners may share facilities to a greater or lesser degree.

- The "No Project/No Action" alternative would include only currently approved and permitted surface water resources for the cost-sharing partners. To meet projected water supply demands, the cost-sharing partners would reallocate available surface water and groundwater resources between municipal and industrial (M&I) and agricultural uses (PCWA only), and among different wholesale and retail areas.

- A Sankey Diversion alternative assumes that PCWA, SSWD, and Roseville would divert water from the Sacramento River near the confluence of the Sacramento River and the Natomas Cross Canal and build separate treatment, storage, and transmission facilities to meet their needs. This diversion would be located at or near the second diversion that NMWC is developing under its CALFED-supported diversion consolidation effort. Sacramento would use groundwater to meet projected unmet demand or would divert separately from the Sacramento River at the Elkhorn site, and construct its own treatment and transmission facilities to serve its needs.
- A Feather River alternative assumes that PCWA, SSWD, and Roseville would divert water from the Feather River and build separate treatment, storage, and transmission facilities to meet their needs. Sacramento would use groundwater to meet projected unmet demand or would divert separately from the Sacramento River at the Elkhorn site, and construct its own treatment and transmission facilities to serve its needs.
- An American River Pump Station alternative assumes that PCWA would expand its American River Pump Station near Auburn and construct new treatment and transmission facilities to serve its needs. SSWD would divert from the existing San Juan Water District (SJWD) diversion facilities at Folsom Dam. Roseville would increase use of groundwater to satisfy its needs in this alternative but not have any additional surface water diversions. Sacramento would use groundwater to meet projected unmet demand or would divert separately from the Sacramento River at the Elkhorn site, and construct its own treatment and transmission facilities to serve its needs.
- A Folsom Dam alternative assumes that PCWA and SSWD would use the existing or expanded diversion, treatment, and transmission facilities of SJWD at Folsom Dam. Roseville would increase use of groundwater to satisfy its needs in this alternative, but not have any additional surface water diversions. Sacramento would use groundwater to meet projected unmet demand or would divert separately from the Sacramento River at the Elkhorn site, and construct its own treatment and transmission facilities to serve its needs.

CHANGES IN ENTITLEMENTS

Implementing a Sacramento River diversion for the cost-sharing partners would require a change in the point of diversion for PCWA's Central Valley Project (CVP) contract and for Sacramento's Sacramento River water right permit, and an exchange agreement between PCWA and Reclamation for Roseville and SSWD diversions under their contract entitlements from PCWA's Middle Fork Project.

WATER DELIVERY QUANTITIES

The additional water supplies considered in the SRWRS for each cost-sharing partner include: 1) additional water supply of up to 35,000 acre-feet (AF) per year for PCWA's M&I demand with a treatment capacity of 65 million gallons per day (mgd), 2) additional water supply of up to 29,000 AF per year in Water Forum average, drier, and driest years for SSWD's M&I demand and groundwater stabilization program with a treatment capacity of 15 mgd, 3) additional water supply of up to 7,100 AF per year for Roseville's M&I demand with a treatment capacity of 10

mgd, and 4) additional water supply of up to 58,000 AF per year (see note below) with a water treatment capacity of 165 mgd for Sacramento's M&I demand.

Note on Sacramento's additional diversion: The Water Forum Agreement does not establish a volumetric limitation for Sacramento's total diversion, and the estimated additional water supply to meet its projected demand is about 58,000 AF per year, based on the difference between the annual demand and the projected average annual diversion for Sacramento that could be realized in 2020 level of development using then-existing diversion facilities on the American and Sacramento rivers. (The 2030 level of statewide demand projection is currently under development by California Department of Water Resources.) However, Sacramento could divert up to 81,800 AF per year under its water rights on the Sacramento River at the Elkhorn site by reducing the diversion under its Sacramento River water rights at its existing Sacramento River Water Treatment Plant downstream of the confluence with the American River.

POTENTIAL PROJECT IMPACTS

This EIS/EIR will build on background data and analyses contained in the EIS for the American River Water Resources Investigation (ARWRI) and the EIR for the Water Forum Agreement. The EIS/EIR scoping process is designed to elicit comments from responsible and commenting agencies and the public on the scope of the EIS/EIR. Comments on potential impacts will be noted and incorporated as appropriate in this EIS/EIR.

A brief, initial list of potential impacts that may be attributable to the proposed project and its alternatives and/or the cumulative conditions, is presented here to initiate the scoping process:

Potential Water Supply Impacts

- Some reduction in delivery to CVP contractors in the Sacramento Valley.
- Some reduction in water delivery south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) to CVP/State Water Project (SWP) contractors.

Potential Botany Impacts

- Disturbance to, or loss of, riparian communities within the vicinity of diversion structures.
- Disturbance to, or loss of, special-status plant populations and sensitive habitats within active construction areas.
- Temporary disturbance to, or permanent loss of, sensitive botanical and wetland resources near active construction areas.

Potential Wildlife Impacts

- Disturbance to, or loss of, special-status wildlife or its habitat.
- Loss of nests of migratory bird species.

Potential Fisheries Impacts

- Flow- and water-temperature-related impacts to various life stages of anadromous salmonids and resident fisheries resources from alterations in the timing, duration, and/or magnitude of diversions.

- Adverse impacts to fisheries resources associated with species-specific life stages from changes in aquatic habitat availability.
- Fish impingement and entrainment at the point of diversion during operational and maintenance activities.
- Increased predation of anadromous salmonids around diversion intake structures.

Potential Water Quality Impacts

- Adverse impacts to the quality of surface water and groundwater potentially caused by changes of sufficient magnitude and frequency over the long term to negatively affect designated beneficial uses, exceed existing regulatory standards, or substantially degrade water quality.
- Increased sedimentation/turbidity levels if dredging is required at any time for maintenance.
- Impacts on the integrated operations of CVP/SWP water facilities such that changes in reservoir, river, and/or Delta conditions may result in reduced water quality conditions.
- Potential to exacerbate groundwater overdraft, thereby decreasing reliability and quality of existing groundwater supplies (i.e., loss of in-lieu groundwater recharge opportunities for conjunctive management).

Potential Recreation Impacts

- Potential loss of marina (applicable to the Sankey diversion alternative only).
- Potential loss of quality of recreation opportunities (applicable to the Feather River diversion only).

Potential Land Use Impacts

- Disruption of an existing community (applicable to the Sankey diversion alternative only).

Potential Agricultural Resources Impacts

- Conversion of agricultural land to urban use for construction of the water treatment facilities off Elverta Road near the Garden Highway.

Potential Noise Impacts

- A temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.
- Long-term noise increase to the recreation experience for users near the pumps during their operation.

Potential Aesthetics Impacts

- Effects on a scenic vista or damage to scenic resources.
- Substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings.

- Creation of a new source of substantial light or glare.
- Deterioration of the recreational experience at certain locations.

Potential Cultural Resources Impacts

- Disturbance of cultural resources due to construction.

Potential Growth Induced Impacts

- Indirect, growth-induced impacts resulting from availability of additional water supplies to support locally approved development (impacts not addressed by applicable local plans, including transportation/traffic, air quality, noise, public services, utilities and service systems, and conversion of agricultural land to other uses).

INTERESTS IN ASSETS HELD IN TRUST

There are Indian Trust Assets located in Placer County, held in trust by the United States for the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria. Direct association between these assets and the proposed action are unknown at this time. There are no assets located in the greater Sacramento metropolitan area, southern Sutter County, or northern Sacramento County.

EIS/EIR SCOPING PROCESS

Reclamation and PCWA will seek public input on topics, issues, and alternatives to be considered in the EIS/EIR during scoping meetings in the month of September 2003. Scoping is an open process of eliciting comment on the contents of the EIS/EIR from responsible, trustee, and reviewing agencies, and interested parties. The views of your agency, relative to the statutory responsibilities of your agency in connection with the proposed project, are being solicited in an effort to determine the scope and content of the environmental document. The Draft EIS/EIR is anticipated to be available for public review in fall of 2005.

Dates and Addresses: The schedule and locations of SRWRS public scoping meetings are as follows:

- Scoping Meetings 1 and 2: Monday, September 15, 2003, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., at Best Western Expo Inn, Expo Room, 1413 Howe Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95825.
- Scoping Meeting 3: Wednesday, September 17, 2003, 6 p.m., at Willows Memorial Hall, 525 West Sycamore Street, Willows, CA 95988.
- Scoping Meeting 4: Monday, September 22, 2003, 6 p.m., at Sutter County Veterans Hall, 1425 Veterans Memorial Drive, Yuba City, CA 95993.
- Scoping Meeting 5: Tuesday, September 23, 2003, 6 p.m., at Radisson Hotel, Delta IV Room, 2323 Grand Canal Boulevard, Stockton, CA 95207.
- Scoping Meeting 6: Wednesday, September 24, 2003, 6 p.m., at Rocklin City Council Chambers, 3970 Rocklin Road, Rocklin, CA 95677.

Special Assistance: If special assistance is required for these meetings, please contact Ms. Sammie Cervantes of Reclamation at (916) 978-5104 no less than five working days before the meeting to allow Reclamation to secure the needed services. A telephone device for the hearing impaired (TDD) is available at (916) 978-5608.

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Written comments should be sent at the earliest possible date, and not later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, October 14, 2003, to Mr. Steve Yaeger c/o Ms. Darcy Granieri, Placer County Water Agency, P.O Box 6570, Auburn, CA, 95604-6570 or Ms. Mona Jefferies-Soniea, Bureau of Reclamation, 2800 Cottage Way, MP-700, Sacramento, CA 95825. Please include your name and address so that Reclamation or PCWA can contact you directly if clarification is needed.

DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Our practice is to make comments available, including names and addresses of respondents, for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from public disclosure, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There may be other circumstances in which we would withhold a respondent's identity from public disclosure, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make available for public disclosure, in their entirety, all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or official of organizations or businesses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Ms. Mona Jefferies-Soniea, Bureau of Reclamation, 2800 Cottage Way, MP-700, Sacramento, CA 95825, telephone: 916-978-5068, fax: 916-978-5094, or Mr. Steve Yaeger, c/o Ms. Darcy Granieri, Placer County Water Agency, P.O Box 6570, Auburn, CA, 95604-6570, telephone: 530-823-4962. Additional information is available online at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/srwr>.

Signed: PCWA

Date:

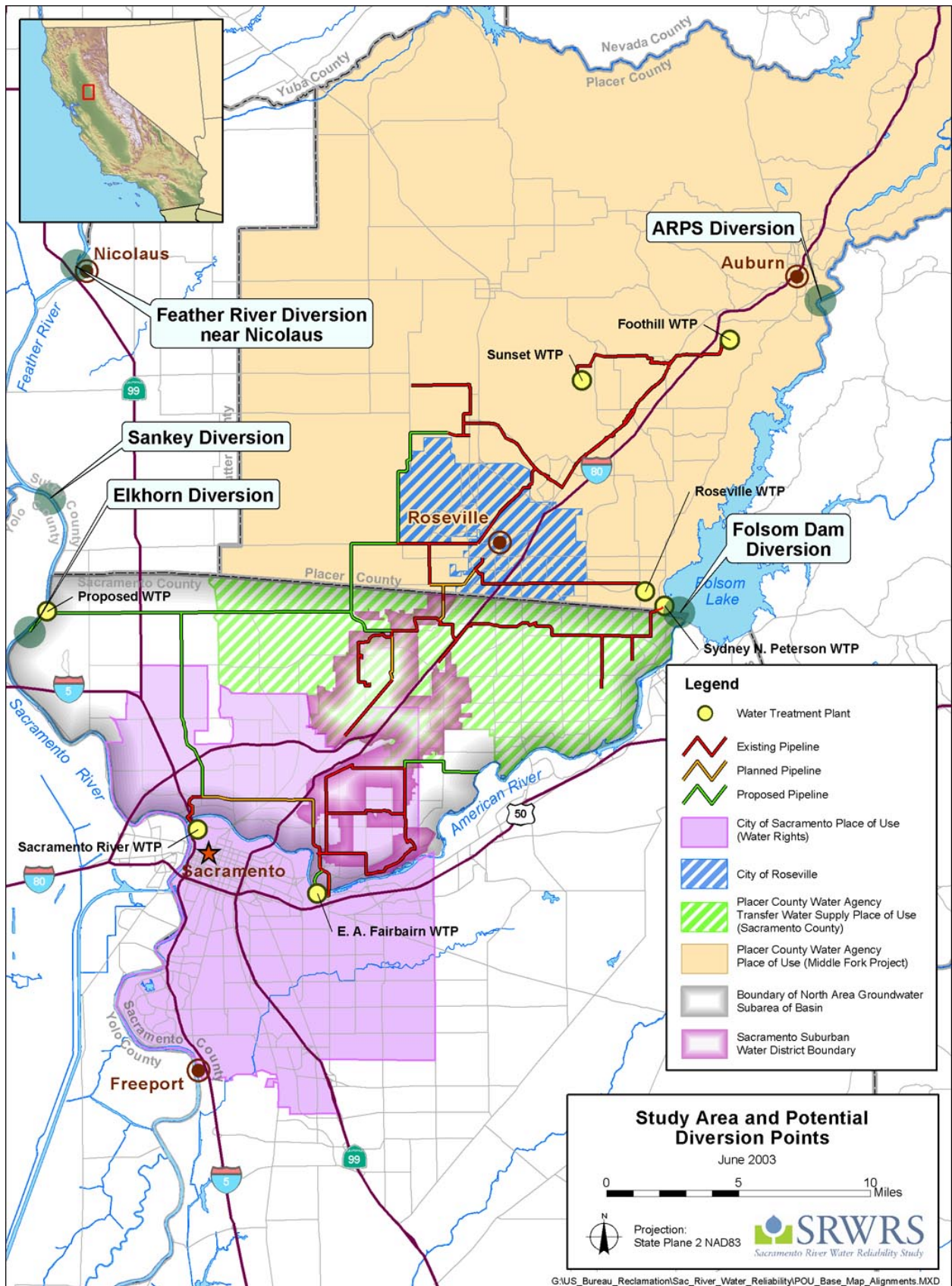


Figure 1. SRWRS Study Area and Potential Diversion Points